

## Forces

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# Mango Cheesecake, Second Attempt

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I didn't mourn losing this tiny piece, but everyone I told about it was shocked at me. They thought less of me. But I had only just begun to feel alive.

At 16, my favorite flower was the Stargazer lily. The Stargazer, as opposed to its pure white parent flower that symbolizes purity and chastity, represents boldness, youth and prosperity. At 16, I felt all grown up. The tiny vacancy inside of me that had left with my first love had grown a tiny bit bigger, but I felt on top of the world with my newfound abundance. I ate, loved and expressed myself with recklessness and lightheartedness, unaware of how much time I really had to do things like that later in my life.

At 18, my favorite flower became the poppy. A small, crimson flower with a black center that symbolizes sleep, peace and death, the poppy was also known for its sedative effects that came from the opium inside it. It was at 18 that I truly wondered if I had a problem with my habits, perhaps even addiction. The small vacancy inside me had grown, but it seemed sated again for a good two years before I realized that it never would be full.

**N**ow I am 20, and I have come to the ironic epiphany that I never stopped picking flowers.

Not for a moment. Their soft petals, delicate fragrances, vivid colors and sweet pollen were never things I could resist, let alone ignore or just exist with. No matter how hard I was reprimanded for picking flowers, I took every flower I could. Had they been wild, common, poisonous, ugly, thorny or rare, I would always give into temptation and pluck them from the grass, ending their short and simple lives. I have not, however, attempted to grow a garden or nurture a potted plant. Who needed the seeds and the soil when you could just have the lovely and sweet part? Maybe sometime soon, I will find the strength within me to do so; to cultivate a living, healthy plant that would stay alive for possible years instead of days. For now, I just can't stop picking flowers.



**Mango Cheesecake, Second Attempt** Mara Headrick

## Giverny

Mara Headrick

Monet had to grow his garden before he could paint it